

COUNTDOWN *for* CASTRO

'Liberators' Train at 3 Camps

By JOSEPH MARTIN and PHIL SANTORA

(Second article of a series)

(© 1981 by News Syndicate Co. Inc.)

CPYRGHT

EACH week, a plane leaves Miami International Airport with 50 to 60 young Cubans bound from local staging areas for one of three secret training camps. There, hardened professional soldiers will whip them into fighting trim for the grimmest job of their lives—the Liberation of Cuba.

The windows of the plane are blacked out with tape and drapes. None of the youngsters gets to see even the members of the crew. They have no idea where they are going—except that they are on their way to strike a blow for Cuba.

From this moment on, their only contact with relatives and friends will be through an APO number. Their mail will be censored. They will not be allowed to leave the camp. Some 6,000 or more are already trained—but where they are training is the best-kept secret of the coun-

DAILY NEWS SPECIAL FEATURE

terrevolution that is being mounted in Florida and Central America.

As part of the same operation, veteran fighter pilots, recruited among defectors from Castro's own air force and from Latin American countries, are training at what was once a dilapidated airstrip in Guatemala, only 35 miles from the Mexican border.

It has been reported that it cost more than \$1 million to put the strip into shape.

JUMP-OFF SPOT FOR CUBA?

During the past few weeks, a dozen B-26 light bombers have been delivered to the airport. At least half a dozen troop carriers also have been sent to what may be a jumping-off spot for Cuba. The field is off limits to all civil aircraft despite a dedication speech by Guatemalan President Miguel Ydigoras Fuentes three months ago in which he said the field had been built to ship food-stuffs.

In addition to this are the staging areas in Miami. The News team visited one of these areas and interviewed some of the youngsters awaiting shipment to hidden training camps.

These and other projects are directed by the most powerful anti-Castro group working in



(NEWS photo)
Manuel Artime, freedom fighter (left), meets in Cuba with hooded sabotage chief, code-named "Francisco," principal quarry of Castro agents.

exile—the Frente Revolucionario Democrático, the FRD (The Democratic Revolutionary Front).

It is an open secret that the FRD is being financed by

American and Cuban industrial interests. The firms whose properties were confiscated by

(Continued on page 22)